

The 2004-2005 school year: Reconfiguring the school district

KRISTINA PALOMBA
CHAIRPERSON

ANTHONY BENT
SUPERINTENDENT

Status of Construction

Work continues on the renovation of the former high school to what will be the Oak Middle School (grades 7-8) in the fall of 2003. The school will have capacity for 1,100 students and will feature an expanded media center, satellite administrative suites, the substantial renovation and replacement of HVAC systems, and the re-conditioning of classrooms and core facilities. Progress is evident in the administrative area, several classroom sections, and on the playing fields. The building committee, under the leadership of Mr. Henry Fitzgerald, is carefully monitoring the progress of construction, and the contractor indicates that the building will be ready as planned.

Grade Configuration Plan

The opening of the Oak Middle School will have a very positive impact on the school system. The fifth grade will move out of the elementary schools, the eighth grade will move out of the high school, and class sizes will improve throughout the district (pending a successful conclusion to the budget process). The new grade configuration is highlighted in the above chart.

No Redistricting

Asking children to leave one elementary school to attend another is difficult for children and parents. Fortunately, each elementary school in Shrewsbury offers an excellent program and parents are happy with the school that their children attend. Nobody wants to change schools! As the administration reviewed its enrollment projections, it became clear that, even with the opening of a new school

Grade Configuration

LEVEL	GRADES
Parker Road Preschool	Preschool
Beal Early Childhood Center	Kindergarten, First Grade (Floral)
Elementary Schools	Grades 1-4
Sherwood Middle School	Grades 5-6
Oak Middle School	Grades 7-8
Shrewsbury High School	Grades 9-12

and the reconfiguration described above, no change in the elementary school neighborhoods would be necessary at this point. (The Beal Early Childhood Center will continue to house some of the first graders from the Floral St. School area as it has done in recent years.) The very good news is that no redistricting will be required for 2004 and class sizes will be better in all schools. Redistricting in future years is a real possibility and the administration and school committee will be monitoring student enrollments as they impact each school.

The Planning Effort

The coordination of all the work to reconfigure the system and create two new schools (Sherwood and Oak) is under the auspices of the Middle Schools Task Force. Judith Evans, the assistant superintendent of schools, is chairing the task force, which includes teachers, parents, and administrators. The work has been delegated to three subcommittees of the MSTF: instructional program, facilities, and transitions. In addition, other subcommittees are formed on an ad hoc basis (e.g., co-curricular activities, move management). Dr. Stephen Lobban, who will become the principal of the Oak Middle School, is actively involved in all phases of the

project as well.

The personnel effort has also begun and the district is currently seeking a principal for the Sherwood Middle School. As the budget for FY05 becomes clearer, we will also hire the additional staff for the Oak Middle School and the other schools. The district's director of human resources, Mr. Kennedy is coordinating this very important task.

Communications

The school committee and administration are working hard to inform parents and the community at large of the progress of the reconfiguration effort and to solicit their opinions. There have been two programs on Superintendent's Forum on the topic (Channel 34), discussions at school committee meetings, a parent forum in November, discussions in the Coordinating Council, and this article in the *Shrewsbury School Journal*. It is our expectation to continue this approach and sponsor another parent and community forum in March.

Do not hesitate to offer your comments and suggestions as we move forward in what is certainly a process the effect of which will be felt for many years. Feel free to email any of the members of the administration or the school committee.

Shrewsbury High School Alumni Association

Auction Dinner

Saturday, April 10, 2004

6 PM

Shresbury High School

Bid on items from local businesses, including tickets to events, gift certificates, museum passes, and more.

Tickets: \$15 each

Call 508-753-6008 or download the form at

<http://www.shrewsburyalumni.org/auction.htm>

<<http://www.shrewsburyalumni.org/auction.htm>> .

Proceeds benefit the SHS student grants program.

Alumni, teachers, parents, students, and friends welcome!

Welcome

The Shrewsbury Special Education PAC welcomes new members who wish to work with other parents in a positive and cooperative atmosphere to serve the needs of children with special needs.

Shrewsbury Adult Education

Shrewsbury Adult Education
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545
Phone: (508) 841-8300 Ext. 1686
Email: adulsted@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us

Class Dates

January 27 & 29

February 3 & 5

February 10 & 12

February 24 & 26

March 2 & 4

March 9 & 11

March 16 & 18

March 23 & 25

Registration: December 29 to January 20

Adult education comes to Shrewsbury

CHRISTINA MACDONALD
& STEPHEN WINTERS
ADULT EDUCATION TEACHER INTERNS

According to the school department's mission statement, it is a goal to promote "the desire to continue to learn throughout life." With the approval of Shrewsbury's School Committee last June, the school district is continuing to research and plan the launch of a pilot Adult Education Program this January, which fulfills this goal in a meaningful way. At this time the program is scheduled to launch an 8-week period beginning on January 27, 2004, and is open to members of the Shrewsbury and surrounding communities.

Investigations into the possibility of creating an independent, self-funded Adult Education Program in Shrewsbury began last January with the formation of a committee comprised of the Superintendent, School Committee members, teachers, and Department of Parks and Recreation administrators. The committee distributed a survey that resulted in evidence that the Shrewsbury community is excited and interested in participating in a

comprehensive Adult Education Program.

The Shrewsbury Public Schools Adult Education Survey, which was distributed throughout the town last spring, revealed that Shrewsbury residents were most interested in the areas of fine arts, languages, computers, business and work life, food and entertaining, history, philosophy and religion, home improvements, health and fitness, literature, travel, and arts and crafts – just to name a few! Thus, two Shrewsbury teachers, Mr. Stephen Winters and Ms. Christina MacDonald, are currently coordinating approximately fifteen to twenty course offerings in these areas. As we are preparing to launch the first batch of pilot courses in January, we are finalizing our list of offerings, recruiting qualified and accessible instructors, and publishing a brochure and registration form that will be available to the public in late December.

From the very beginning, the Shrewsbury residents, business community, School Department and teachers have exhibited excitement and support for this innovative program. We are looking forward to launching this program with quality

courses that offer something for everyone's interest – from knitting to web design to English as a Second Language.

We are expecting that initially all courses will be held at the new, state-of-the-art Shrewsbury High School which offers the latest in technology and resources. Tuition will depend upon a number of factors, including the length of the program and the cost of materials, but we are estimating that the average eight-week course would be an affordable \$160. If this first program is as successful as preliminary interest would predict, then we hope to expand into a larger, fully self-funded, year-round program offering courses in all areas and levels of interest.

While we are approaching a very busy holiday season, take time to do something for yourself! Look for our brochure and flyers in late December and register for the course or courses that pique your interest. We are expecting the Adult Education Program to be popular, so don't miss out. If you are interested in hearing more about the program, please contact us via email at cmacdonald@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us. See you on January 27, 2004!

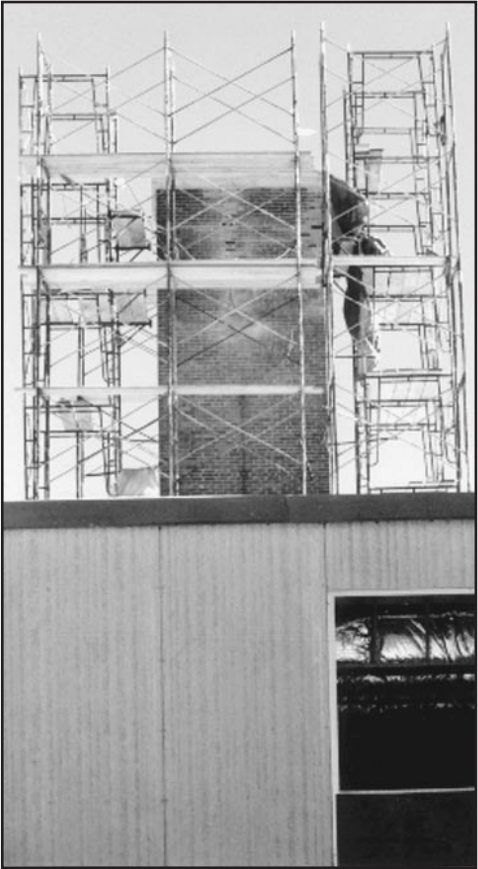


PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Scaffolding surrounds the chimney at the former High School. This renovated building will be named Oak Middle School. When finished it will house grades 7 and 8.